

FLATHEAD COUNTY PLANNING TASK FORCE  
Thursday, June 7, 2005  
Earl Bennett Building  
4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

<u>Members Present</u>	<u>Members Absent</u>	<u>Others</u>
Dennis Hester Jed Fisher Mike Meehan Joe Russell Jim Patrick Tom Jentz Chris Coughlin Velvet Phillips-Sullivan Bill Shaw Karen Reeves Jane Leivo Kerry Finely Turner Askew Diana Blend Mike Pence Richard Surynt Jerry Nix	Tad Rosenberry Charlie Johnson Pam Kennedy Gary Marks Cal Scott Peggy Goodrich Myrt Webb Gary Hall	Bill Baum Mike Miller, MDOT Chris Ahner, NMAR

Nix called the meeting to order

Agenda Approval

Added to the agenda under Committee Reports were the Water & Sewer Committee and the Bicycle Path Committee.

Sullivan made a motion to approve the Agenda, as amended. Russell seconded the motion. All in favor

Minutes Approval

Fisher made a motion to approve the May minutes, as presented. Coughlin seconded the motion. All in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

Water & Sewer Committee Report

Issues identified by this committee include protection of water quality; getting more people on public sewer; development around the lake; recharge of groundwater;

carrying capacity; development vs. extension of services; capacity of the municipal sewage treatment; impacts associated with extending sewer; where to direct growth; high density development; defining a regional sewer plant; impact zones; storm water; drinking water and water wells.

Coughlin stated that topography and soil types need to be considered, as well. Russell agreed, adding that they will include this in their research.

Sullivan asked if there was a way to determine the number of people who can be sustained in the valley with regard to the waste water factor. Russell responded that they did a risk based study but it would require too much data to run the program. He added that there is enough water. How we dispose of the waste is an issue. Russell stated that he doesn't know if there is enough time to address this concern through this process, but it is definitely something that can be done in the long-term.

Blend asked if the agricultural use around the county had an affect on the aquifer. Russell stated that best management practices are what people use in agricultural uses. There should be no impact if the use is done correctly. He added that agriculture is not regulated other than the use of pesticides and herbicides.

#### Bike Path Committee

Russell stated that he can obtain a \$4,000 grant within one week to do a study. This grant is through the obesity project at MSU. He would like to see some money directed at identifying and planning. Jentz added that there is money for pedestrian and trail planning and money for bricks and mortar. The City of Kalispell is already working on this. It was suggested that Mike Baker and Jed Fisher get together in this regard.

Coughlin stated that committee is also connecting the cities' economic centers and recreational areas. The objectives identified include offering incentives for easement grants; defining recreation vs. transportation paths; community outreach and education materials; finding areas for paths to be placed and connected; other modes of transportation. Discussion turned to the need for public transportation and incorporating bike paths within traffic areas.

Goodrich stated that she has been involved in incentive programs for public transportation in the Phoenix/Los Angeles areas. These programs are usually mandated programs due to air quality. She wasn't sure what participation would be received based on the nature of the valley. The program she was involved in did not pay for itself. It was suggested that sponsorship from larger corporations be considered. Discussion was held.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### Collins Work Program

Russell stated that the Task Force will be working on the county-wide resource document. The process of building a growth policy will start with a Resource & Analysis document. This will be a big task for this group. Kalispell has a good document to go by. Russell added that the consultant is not ready to adopt a template for this group to move forward with this document. This Task Force needs to talk about how they will put together this document. The Kalispell document will be a good outline to follow but this group will address everything that is going on around the county, to include the three cities.

B.J. Grieve is putting together an issues identification paper and the Task Force can bring in expertise to combine this information. This could also be done through committees. Shaw was concerned about how this group will compile the vast amount of information out there. He also stressed his concern about the information being accurate and factual because of the volume. It will cost money to pay for any expert assistance. Shaw added that Columbia Falls spent twice as much money than the county is proposing to spend. He is very concerned about the result. While this group has enough technical people, he is concerned about the collection of data that will be necessary to put together a good document.

Nix agreed that money is a concern; however, this Task Force very much knows the issues that they need to address. Whether or not they can find all of the information necessary to put together the Resource and Analysis document, they will have enough to get started and put something together. They can fill in the gaps later, if necessary. He is hoping for more money to assist in putting this document together.

Russell stated that there is a lot of information and data that is available. It just hasn't been put in any type of structured format. Goodrich added that the planning office has hired a person to go through all of the files on all of the subdivisions and that person is putting together information in this regard.

Shaw asked who would be going through this information and putting together the information. Nix stated that an inventory of data will be available at the next meeting, as well as the condition of the data, such as how good it is, what type of format it is, etc. This information will be available at the August meeting.

Surynt stated that Grieve will be acting as liaison between the county and the consultant. The Resource and Analysis document needs to be done before the issues paper can be done. His concern was the timeline and whether the Task Force can meet this timeline. Russell stated that the timelines will have to be pushed in order to complete the Resource and Analysis document. The Health Department will use this time to put together information that they have and what they are involved in.

Discussion turned to how a lot of this information can be compiled due to the fact that a lot of departments don't have access to the information like the Health Department does. Askew noted that the GIS office has a lot of information and asked if this group

has contacted GIS in this regard. Jentz stated that GIS is the tool that they will need in order to compile the information.

Blend noted that the Planning Board has already done a lot of information gathering. Russell stated that they have access to all of the Planning Board meetings regarding the growth policy. They can go through the minutes to find the information they need. It was suggested that they find a FVCC student to work with the GIS office in this regard.

There was question as to what the planning staff will do and what the task force will be doing. Nix stated that the task force is responsible for the Resource & Analysis paper, which has to be completed prior to the issues paper being done. The issues paper will be done by the planning staff.

Jentz stated that a social and economic committee should be formed to address affordable housing, economic concerns, etc. After discussion, Diana Blend and Jane Leivo became members of the Affordable Housing Committee.

Blend asked whether the public should be notified with regard to the committee organization and meeting times. Hester stated that the Task Force meeting is posted on the Commissioners agenda. They could easily put the committee meetings on this agenda, as well. Blend added that the Education Committee has been considering a website for the Task Force and would like to move forward with this. They are asking that the Task Force approve this.

Blend added that the Education Committee is also putting together press releases and they are thinking about doing presentations to special interest groups. She asked who should be the spokesperson for this group. Nix felt that the spokesperson would depend on the issue being discussed. Blend stated that all of the information needs to be funneled through the Education Committee, so that the public receives the same information regardless of how it is being relayed. Nix stated that they need to decide how the information will be presented to the public and this should be determined by the next meeting.

#### Task Force Member Comment Period

Sullivan stated that she would like everybody to keep a record of how much time they spend working on this group, as well as the committees. The members should also keep a record of any other expenses they incur during this process. This information will be helpful in applying for any grants.

#### Public Comment Period

No comments were made by the public

The meeting as adjourned at 6:00 p.m.